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SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR

¶1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for September 18, 2007. Please note Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized herein.

POLITICAL:

¶2. HURRIYET: The daily alleges Pinar Selek, a sociologist held as a defendant in the case involving the 1998 bombing of a touristic shopping area of Istanbul, was the love interest of Abdullah Ocalan. The daily further reports allegations Ocalan would set up a separate pro-Kurdish party to be led by Selek and former DEP Deputy Hatip Dicle. Selek categorically denied these reports, including accounts of her meeting with Ocalan.

¶3. EVRENSEL: Authorities continue to question seven people detained in Van's Baskale district in connection with the September 11 discovery of a vehicle containing explosives in an Ankara parking lot. The vehicle was stolen in Istanbul a year ago and was reportedly housed in a Van warehouse for one year. The police, who are searching for 11 other suspects in the case, are also trying to find out if the case has any links to the PKK.

¶4. EVRENSEL / RADIKAL: DTP Acting Chairperson Selma Irmak expressed concern over reported pressures her party was facing, saying history could repeat itself if their party shared the same fate as the former DEP, which was closed in 1994.

SECURITY

¶5. HURRIYET / RADIKAL: Hakkari Governor's office announced police had found one kilogram of plastic explosives in a house in Hakkari's Yuksekova district, and had arrested two of three suspects. This development reportedly prevented a possible attack targeting the Governor's Office or the Security Directorate.

¶6. HURRIYET ONLINE: Jandarma teams caught 46 Iraqi refugees, who entered the country illegally, in Sirnak's Silopi district. The refugees said they were fleeing the cholera outbreak in their home towns.

CRIME AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

¶7. HURRIYET: Provincial jandarma command teams searching a car in a checkpoint on the road between Silvan and Hazro districts in Diyarbakir found 24 kilograms of hashish hidden in the car. Three people were arraigned.

¶8. ZAMAN / HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Police stopped a car

traveling from Van in the Bitlis province and found 22 kilograms of heroin hidden in the car.

CULTURE / SOCIETY / ENVIRONMENT

¶9. ZAMAN: The Mersin Municipality's Basketball team hired two American basketball players for a term of one year. Separately, the daily reports the 'Botas-Cup 4 tournament', an event held annually by Botasspor Basketball Team of Adana's Ceyhan district, will be held between 9 and 11 October this year.

¶10. EVRENSEL / BOLGE / RADIKAL: Schools started yesterday, however, thousands of students in Sanliurfa province and Cukurova region were not able attend school due to their work as agricultural laborers; the cotton harvesting period coincides with the national opening of schools. Evrensel daily writes in Adana districts where mostly Kurds live, children are primarily working and selling items in the streets.

¶11. BOLGE / EKSPRES / HURRIYET (CUKUROVA) / ZAMAN: To mark the opening of the new school semester, students visited offices of the Adana governor and mayor and presented flowers. The Adana governor's message underscored violence at schools will be terminated through concerted effort from all members of the community. The Governor and the Mayor also presided over the opening ceremony of a new primary school in the Yuregir district. Adana's governor noted to the school's principal that a banner had misspelled one of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's famous adages. Adana's CHP deputy Gaye Erbatur also paid visits to several schools in Adana. The Cukurova supplement of Hurriyet daily quotes Adana's AKP Deputy Necdet Unuvar as announcing the number of students in classrooms has decreased from 90 to 40 students per classroom in the last five years, thanks to efforts

ADANA 00000110 002 OF 002

to construct and provide more classrooms at schools.

¶12. HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Gaziantep Mayor announced two projects under development in the province: the construction of a planetarium, and a botanical park that would house 4000 types of plants.

¶13. HURRIYET (CUKUROVA) / SABAH (GUNEY): Mersin Mayor Macit Ozcan attended an iftaar dinner in one of the municipality's public tents set up to provide food to Mersin's citizens throughout the month of Ramazan. Separately, Yuregir Mayor Omer Topcu held an iftaar dinner with his municipality workers in Adana. Sanliurfa Governor, his wife, and the Provincial Director of Social Services had an iftaar dinner with twenty girls from an orphanage in Sanliurfa.
GREEN